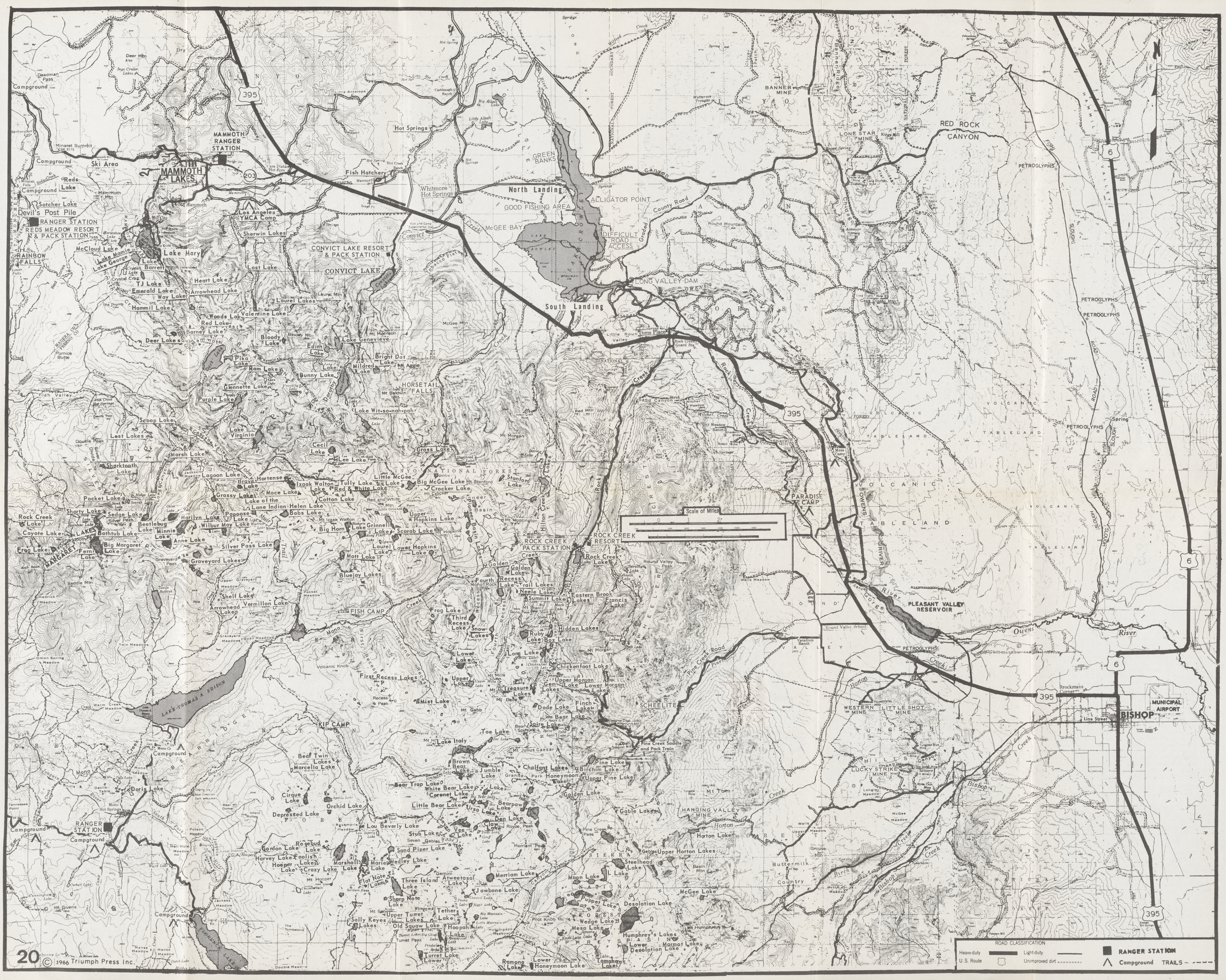

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ROCK CREEK - CROWLEY LAKE

ROCK CREEK - LAKE CROWLEY AREA

Crowley Lake, the world-famous "lair of the tackle-busters" in the Eastern High Sierra, located 25 miles north of Bishop on Highway 395, offers some of the most publicized trout fishing in California.

The huge man-made reservoir, a key unit of Los Angeles' domestic system, was formed when the Department of Water and Power constructed a dam across the southern end of Long Valley to hold back the Owens River. Completed in 1941, the reservoir was named for the late Father John J. Crowley, the beloved "padre of the Sierra." The lake is 12 miles long and 5 miles wide at McGee Bay, its widest point.

Crowley Lake is basically a facility for storing Eastern High Sierra snow and rain water, which is transported to Los Angeles through a tremendous aqueduct. When the dam was completed in 1941 and Crowley Lake was formed, anglers began to stream into the area.

Docks, launching ramp and other facilities were installed by the Recreation and Park Department and a fleet of rental motorboats and rowboats were provided. An excellent life guard patrol was established, which has established an amazing safety record despite the thousands of fishermen and boaters who visit the reservoir each year.

Crowley season, relatively short, usually begins the Saturday nearest May first and ends July 31.

Cooperating with the City of Los Angeles to make Crowley Lake an outstanding trout fishing center, is the California Department of Fish and Game. The tons of fish that are caught each year are the result of the fine work of fish culture specialists at the Hot Creek Hatchery, located about 10 miles north of Crowley Lake, at the head waters of Hot Creek.

The location and temperature of Hot Creek are ideal for the development of the eggs, and the incubation process is hastened here, under these ideal conditions. Later, many of the young trout are transferred to the Fish Springs Hatchery near Big Pine, to provide room for better growth. The Department plants the young trout in late August and by the following spring with the opening of trout season, it is possible for the experienced angler to catch his limit.

The competition for the largest fish on opening day is always very keen, and the Mel R. Morrison Trophy goes to the fisherman catching the largest fish on those days. The Robert L. Burns Trophy, provided by the Southern California Rod and Reel Club, is a perpetual award that goes to the sportsman who brings in the largest trout in the entire Crowley season.

Boating is popular at Crowley, but because it is a domestic water reservoir, water skiing and swimming are not permitted. Every private boat launched at Crowley Lake must have a permit that will be issued following inspection of the Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department. Boats which measure less than 12 feet, stem to stern, down the center are not permitted on Crowley Lake. City-operated motorboats and boats without motors are available for rental. Fees are $10 per day for motorboats and $5 per day for boats without motors. Private boat permits cost $7.50 for May and June, $5.00 for July. The season permit includes launching and safety inspection. Further information about boating regulations and reservations for boat rentals are available at Room 755, Ctiy Hall, Los Angeles, California 90012, or by calling MAdison 4-5211, Station 1515.

The Lake is a public fishing facility and motorboat speed, equipment and other regulations adopted by the Division of Small Craft and Harbors, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Fish and Game, State of California are in effect.

The South Landing is the main center of activity on Crowley Lake, but there are those who prefer the North Landing. Also in this area is Whitmore Hot Springs, east of Highway 395, which is open for use by Crowley Lake anglers, campers and vacationers during the summer season. Whitmore Hot Springs opens about June 19, and remains open until Labor Day. The natural warm-water plunge is supplied a constant stream by the many warm-water springs in the Eastern High Sierras, and the crystal-clear mineral water maintains a temperature of 90 degrees.

Of interest to fly fishermen, the Special Fly Fishing Season on Crowley Lake starts September 15 and runs until October 31. Only artificial flies with barbless hooks may be used during this season. The daily limit is five trout, each of which must be 12 inches or more in length.

Fishermen are restricted to fishing on the shore along an area extending from North Landing west to the mouth of Convict Creek. To reach this area, turn off 395 at the Benton Crossing Road. Just beyond the Whitmore Springs plunge, turn right on the dirt road that takes you to North Landing. For more details on tackle, boundaries, etc., fishermen should check with the California Fish and Game Code. This is one of the few places in California where the experienced fly fisherman can practice his art, and it is rapidly gaining in popularity.

A number of good streams flow into Lake Crowley from the Sierras on the west. Among these are Rock Creek, Hilton Creek, McGee Creek, and Convict Creek—all good angling streams. There are some lakes that are small but good for fishing in the area to the west of 395. There is Davis Lake, the Hilton Lakes reached by daily pack train and situated at 10,050 feet elevation, and Convict Lake reached by a good surfaced road from 395. There is a lodge resort and pack station at Convict Lake, with an elevation just under 10,000 feet. Most of the lakes have boats, supplies, camping areas, restaurants, pack horses and overnight accommodations. These lakes and streams have Rainbows, Browns, Brookies and some Goldens. Further on north 395 is the Hot Creek Road, airport, Hot Creek Fish Hatchery and Hot Springs. Hot Creek is known for the size of Browns and Rainbows caught wtih flies. Because the water in Hot Creek is warm and enjoyable it is fun to swim in the creek.

More than most other areas in the Sierras, this particular area has an abundance of places to stay in any season.

An interesting side trip that can be made from the Crowley area, is to take the road crossing Long Valley Dam, northeast to Waterson Canyon Road, through Red Rock Canyon, going south on Fish Slough Road towards Bishop. There you will be able to view the famous Indian petroglyphs. These famous carvings on rocks tell the story of ancient, long-forgotten people. Although these mysterious picture carvings have been studied by many anthropologists, none have been able to provide any answers as to their meaning or the period when these artists lived.

For those who wish to visit the high country, there are excellent guides and pack trains in the Crowley Lake area.

HILTON LAKES CANYON — Just past the Father Crowley monument is the turn off, on the west, to the Hilton Lakes Canyon. This area can be reached only by trail, but is one of the loveliest and most secluded of all the canyons of the Eastern High Sierra. Served by pack stations located at the foot of the canyon for campers, fishermen, and hunters. There are a total of eleven lakes in the Hilton Canyon.

Rock Creek Lodge, Route 3, Box 12, Bishop, California. 25 miles north of Bishop, off Highway 395. Just south of Rock Creek Station (known as Tom's Place) turn southwest on the Rock Creek Road for 8 miles, the Lodge is located on Rock Creek. K. H. Roby, Manager. Housekeeping cabins completely furnished. Linen, bedding, dishes, cooking utensils, wood and electric lights.

The Lodge store carries groceries, fishing tackle, licenses, beer, soft drinks, ice cream and ice.

Well arranged, free public campgrounds are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service, throughout the Basin floor, near Rock Creek.

Fishing in this region is unexcelled. More than 60 lakes, plus streams, with Rainbow, Eastern and Golden trout. The Rock Creek Pack Station is nearby and saddle and pack horses for trips into the wilderness area. Trails lead over Mono Pass to Pioneer Basin, Mono Creek Recesses, Bear Creek and the South Fork of the San Joaquin River.

The Lodge is located in the giant pines on Rock Creek, and the natural beauty of the surroundings make this a delightful spot to visit.

McGEE CANYON — Four miles north on Highway 395 is the crossing of McGee Creek, named for the pioneer family of Alney McGee, one of the original settlers of Long Valley. Camp sites are located along McGee Creek to the west of the highway. A road on the west proceeds up the canyon for two miles, terminating just above the pack station located in the canyon.

Hilton Lakes Camp and Pack Station, Route 3, Box 156, Bishop, California. Phone Area Code 714 WEbster 5-4310. Located ½ mile off Highway 395 near Hilton Creek. Pack trips to the Hilton Lakes area. Write o. phone for reservations.

Rock Creek Pack Station, Herbert London, P.O. Box 248, Bishop, California, 93514. (Winter phone only UP 2-8331). Located 34 miles from Bishop, off Highway 395. Turn south-west off highway just south of Tom's Place. Easiest access to Pioneer Basin, Hopkins Basin, The Recesses, Mono Creek and the Hilton Lakes. Golden, Rainbow and Brook trout; deer hunting. Write for free maps and brochure.

McGee Creek Lodge, Box 160, Star Route 3, Bishop, California. Phone WE 5-4233. 32 miles north of Bishop on Highway 395. Alice and Eddie Stark, owners. McGee Creek Lodge, a sportsman's resort, ideally located on Crowley Lake, close to many other trout-yielding streams, offers all types of outdoor recreation. A long time favorite spot for hunters as well as fishermen, it also offers the ideal settings for boating, riding, hiking and picnicking. In addition, an ever-increasing numbers of skiers and other winter sports enthusiasts are making McGee Creek their headquarters, due to the heavy "powder snow" fall this area enjoys.

Coffee shop (serving a la carte meals). Cocktail lounge. Laundromat. Chevron Station. Every convenience for the vacationer is provided here. It is advisable to call or write for reservations. Rooms are available in the main Lodge, as well as modern housekeeping cabins. Modern travel-trailer camp.

ROCK CREEK PACK TRAIN

Photo by Bill Kelsey

Convict Lake Resort, Route 3, Bishop, California. Located 35 miles north of Bishop, just 2 miles off Highway 395. Phone WEbster 5-4213. Bob and Dorothy Wenger, owners. Located in a setting of scenic grandeur, Convict Lake Resort provides all facilities for the fisherman, hunter, boater or vacationer. A favorite retreat for hunters, as many bucks are taken in this area. Fishing in Convict Lake is especially good, or you may pack in to the fabulous high country lakes from here.

Facilities include: housekeeping cabins, clean, comfortable and completely furnished; restaurant and cocktail lounge, fine food in new modern restaurant. General store with groceries, tackle, camping equipment, souvenirs.

Boat and motor rentals, dockage and cement launching ramp, protected by new breakwater.

Horses—hour rides, day rides, pack trips, on well-trained sure-footed stock.

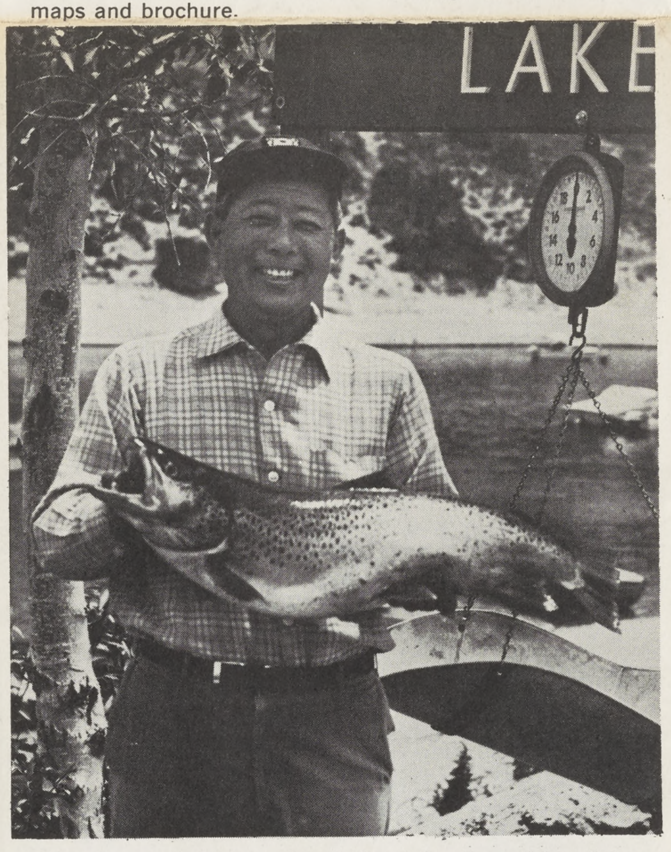
U.S. Forest campgrounds, with running water and restrooms.

Launching Ramp, Lake Crowley
L. A. Dept. Recreation & Parks Photo

Hans Resort, Route 3, Box 100, Bishop, California. One half mile off Highway 395 at Crowley on Hilton Creek. Phone WE 5-4309. Tony and Ginny De Gano, owners. Deluxe housekeeping cottages, private baths with showers, electric refrigeration, gas furnaces. Located in center of all good hunting, fishing, skiing. Open all year.

Excellent fishing, two private trout streams. The Resort overlooks Crowley Lake, and the cabins are located in beautiful shaded surroundings. A friendly resort, where hunting, fishing and hiking in the summer and fall, skiing in the winter makes it a family favorite. Saddle and pack stock available. Pack trips to the mountains can be arranged.

Store, supplies and restaurants are nearby. Boat and guide service on Crowley Lake.



This whopper being proudly displayed by Henry Ida, of Los Angeles, weighed 11 pounds 2 ounces, and was caught by Ida while trolling with worms, on Crowley Lake.

South Landing, Lake Crowley
L. A. Dept. Recreation & Parks Photo

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MAP OF THE

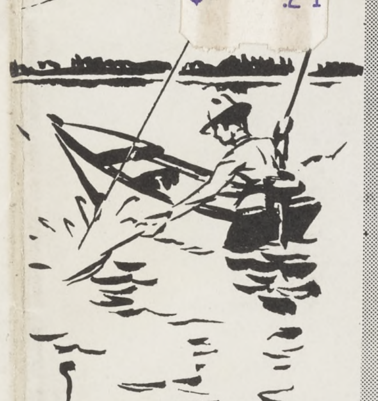
HIGH SIERRA CROWLEY LAKE

LONG VALLEY
ROCK CREEK McGEE CREEK
HILTON LAKES CONVICT LAKE

25¢

B 27
Sporting Goods
$ .21

- HIKING
- HUNTING
- FISHING
- CAMPING
- TRAILER PARKS
- RESORTS



Kym's GUIDE No.20

MAPS and CHARTS of Recreation Areas

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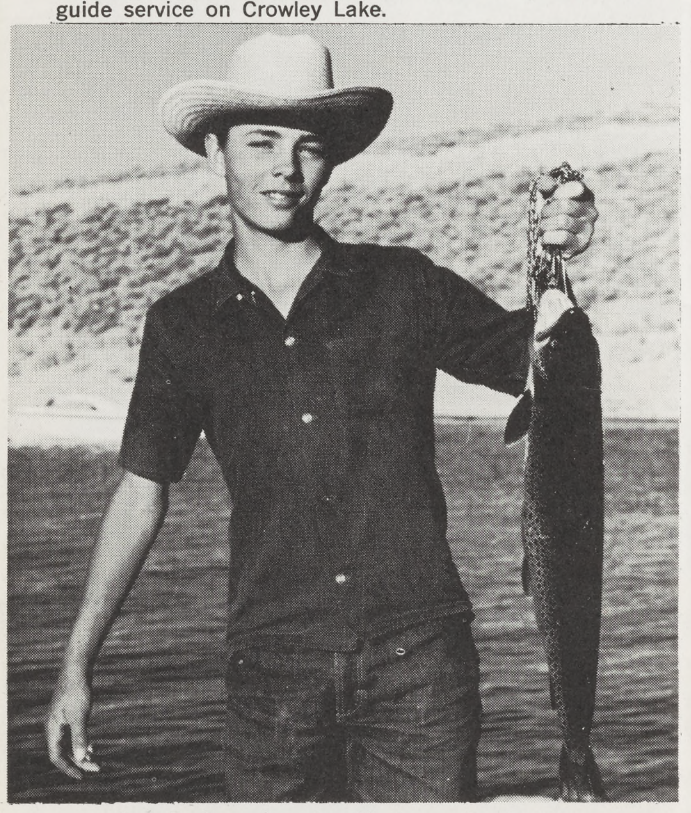
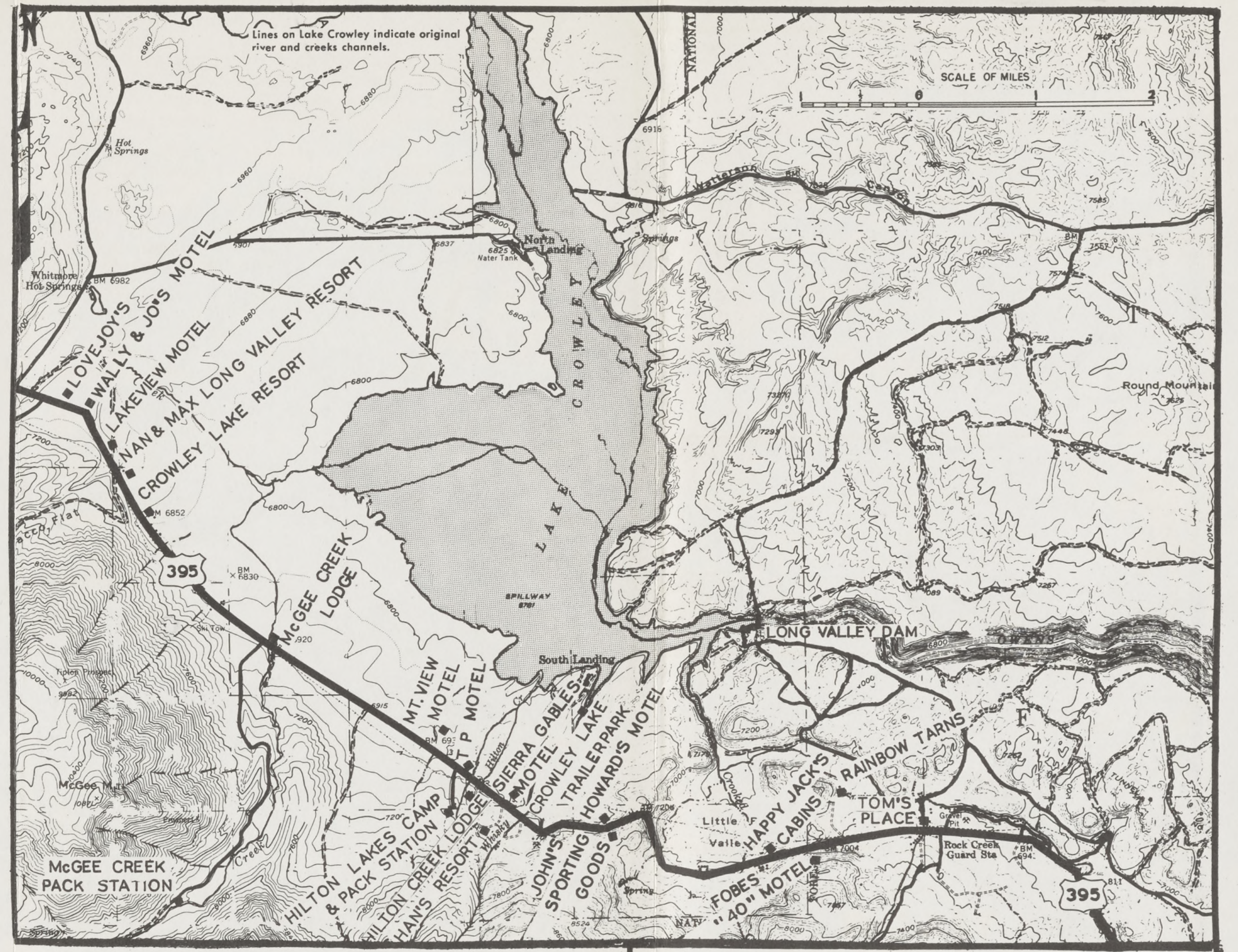


Larry De Gano shows how it's done at Crowley Lake
David M. Payne, Photo



PUBLIC CAMPGROUNDS

ROCK CREEK RECREATION AREA:

Located south and west of Tom's Place and 5 miles southeast of Crowley Lake. A store, cafe, service station and commercial trailer court are located at Tom's Place with phone service. Administered by the District Ranger, Bishop, California.

Rock Creek Canyon Picnic Ground, located 24 miles north of Bishop on Rock Creek along old Highway 395. 7 picnic units. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 6,500 feet. Season—May to October.

Tuff Campground, located 1 mile east of Tom's Place on Rock Creek north of the highway. 15 camps with some fireplaces. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 7,000 feet. Season—May to October.

Rock Creek, located 1 mile south of Tom's Place on good paved road. Situated among boulders with pinyon pine and jeffrey pine cover. 85 camps with stoves. Piped water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 7,500 feet. Season—May to October. Newly reconstructd to modern standards. Fees are charged at this campground.

Holiday Camp, located 1 mile south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 20 tables plus additional unimproved camps. Piped water. Open only on peak weekends and holidays when other campgrounds in vicinity are filled to capacity.

Aspen Park, located on Rock Creek 3½ miles south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 5 camps with stoves. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 8,100 feet. Season—May to October.

Iris Meadow, located on Rock Creek about 4 miles south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 16 camps. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 8,300 feet. Season—May to October.

Big Meadow, located on Rock Creek, 4½ miles south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 23 camps. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 8,600 feet. Season—May to October.

Palisades, on Rock Creek 5 miles south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 5 camps. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 8,600 feet. Season—May to October.

East Fork, located along Rock Creek 6 miles south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 16 camps. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 9,300 feet. Season—June to October.

Pine Grove, located on Rock Creek 8 miles south of Tom's Place on good paved road. 17 camps. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 9,300 feet. Season—June to October.

Rock Creek Lake Inlet, on Rock Creek and Rock Creek Lake, 11 miles south of Tom's Place. 24 camps. Stream and lake water. Fishing, hunting, picnicking, boating. Elevation 9,600 feet. Season—June to October.

Rock Creek Outlet, on Rock Creek and Rock Creek Lake, 11 miles south of Tom's Place. 18 camps. Stream and lake water. Fishing, hunting, picnicking and boating. Elevation 9,600 feet. Season—June to October.

Mosquito Flat, located along Rock Creek 12 miles south of Tom's Place. 10 camps. Stream water. Fishing, hunting. Entrance to High Sierra Wilderness. Elevation 10,000 feet. Season—June to October. Trailers not advisable.

McGEE CREEK AREA:

Located west of Highway 395 opposite Crowley Lake. Supplies at McGee Creek Lodge. This is a lightly developed canyon that is a gateway to the High Sierra Wilderness and McGee Pass.

McGee Creek, on McGee Creek road 2 miles south of U.S. 395 via dirt road. 8 camps. Stream water. Supplies at McGee Creek store. Fishing, hunting. Elevation 7,600 feet. Season—May to October.

CONVICT LAKE AND RECREATION AREA:

Located west of Highway 395 between Crowley Lake and Mammoth Lakes areas. An outstandingly scenic lake the colorful mountain peaks on either side. Gateway to the High Sierra Wilderness and back country lakes.

Convict Lake and Creek, located on Convict Lake and along Convict Creek. 2 miles west of U.S. 395. Good paved road. 84 camps with stoves. Piped water. Supplies at Convict Lake Resort. Fishing, hunting, boating, picnicking. Elevation 7,600 feet. Season—May to October. Newly reconstructed to modern standards. Fees are charged at this campground.

Hot Creek Geysers Picnic Ground, on Hot Creek Road 3½ miles north of Convict Lake and 1½ miles north of Highway 395. Fishing and swimming in Hot Creek Gorge. 3 picnic units. Elevation 7,040 feet. Season—year long.

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